

# THE EVACUATION OF THE RHINELAND

by

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## INTRODUCTION

The meeting in Paris on February 9 of the Committee of Experts charged with effecting a final settlement of the reparation question makes timely a review of the allied problem of the Rhineland occupation. The Germans in demanding evacuation of the occupied territory before the dates set by the peace treaty have refused officially to link the two questions of occupation and reparation. The French on the other hand maintain that only after the latter problem has been settled can the question of evacuation be discussed. The Geneva agreement between the six great powers, arrived at on September 16, 1928, provided for the appointment of two committees of experts; one dealing with reparation and the other described as a commission of "verification and conciliation." The latter committee has not yet been appointed. Its task was envisaged at Geneva as setting the date for Rhineland evacuation, as well as thereafter maintaining a certain measure of control over the demilitarized Rhineland with power to investigate German disarmament and the French defensive frontier fortifications as well. Doubtless after the reparation experts complete their task the verification and conciliation committee will be called into being.

The attention of the American public has been further directed to this problem by a statement made by Senator Borah, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, published in the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* on January 24, 1929. Senator Borah declared himself emphatically in favor of immediate evacuation of the Rhineland, both in the interests of European peace and in order to facilitate German reparation payments.

Official figures of the number of Allied troops that have been and are in the

Rhineland do not seem to be available but the unofficial estimates give an idea of what the occupation has meant to the Germans. In 1922 there were about 147,665 Allied soldiers living upon German soil. By 1924, on account of the Ruhr invasion, the number had increased to about 200,000 —of which 103,552 were French. The remainder were Belgian and British troops, the latter having 10,192 soldiers in the Rhineland in 1924. Since then the forces of occupation have been substantially reduced, but at present there seem to be between 60,000 and 70,000 troops still on the Rhine.<sup>1</sup>

The cost of maintaining the armies of occupation is borne by Germany and deducted from the German annuities under the Dawes Plan. The occupation costs constitute a prior charge on the German budget. Since the coming into force of the Dawes Plan, the occupation has cost the Reich and the Allies a total of 437,599,-475.01 gold marks, or \$109,399,368.75.<sup>2</sup>

THE last decade has witnessed many changes in the international development of Europe. The first period, from the Armistice to the London conference of August 1924, was characterized by intense Franco-German hostility, culminating in what practically amounted to the renewal of hostilities in the Ruhr occupation, the subsequent German passive resistance and the Franco-Belgian reprisals. This period was marked by a serious internal situation in Germany, the depreciation of the German currency, the separatist movement in the Rhineland, the struggle to disarm the Reich and finally the reparation problem—the most difficult of all.

1. For more detailed figures, cf. Appendix I, p. 15.  
2. For annual costs, cf. Appendix II, p. 15.

The second period, from the London conference to the end of 1925, witnessed a decided betterment of the situation. With the coming into force of the Dawes Plan and the consequent removal of the reparation problem from the political arena, the way was cleared for the settlement of other problems. The Locarno Conference in October 1925 was the outstanding factor of this period, one of the first tangible results of which was the evacuation of the first zone of the Rhineland in December 1925, albeit almost a year later than the time stipulated in the treaty.

### TREATY BASIS OF THE OCCUPATION

It is now more than ten years since the Armistice and since Allied troops began their watch on the Rhine. According to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, the forces of occupation are entitled to remain for six more years, when if Germany has complied with the terms of the treaty they will be withdrawn.

As a guarantee of the execution of the treaty by Germany,<sup>3</sup> "the German territory situated to the west of the Rhine, together with the bridgeheads, will be occupied by Allied and Associated troops for a period of fifteen years from the coming into force of the . . . treaty," or until 1935. This provision merely continued the occupation which had been established under the terms of the Armistice in November 1918, the limits of the occupied area being identical under both régimes.

The area of the occupied territory after the Armistice comprised about 31,000 square kilometers with a population of more than 6,000,000 inhabitants. There was, however, an important change in the legal and administrative conditions of the occupation after the Armistice, during which period the control had of course been in the hands of the military authorities.

The Versailles Treaty stipulated that "if the conditions of the present Treaty are faithfully carried out by Germany, the occupation . . . will be successively restricted as follows:

The third period has been marked by the entrance of Germany into the League of Nations in September 1926 with a permanent seat on the Council, the withdrawal of the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission from Germany on January 31, 1927 and the shift of the control of German disarmament from the Inter-Allied Commission to the League Council. Finally, with Germany's re-entry into the family of nations and her remarkable come-back in the economic field, has come the concentration of German efforts on evacuation of the second zone of the Rhineland before 1930 and complete evacuation before 1935.

1. At the expiration of five years there will be evacuated: the bridgehead of Cologne" and the territory which formed the so-called first zone of the Rhineland.
2. At the expiration of ten years there will be evacuated: the bridgehead of Coblenz" and the territory which formed the so-called second zone of the Rhineland.
3. At the expiration of fifteen years there will be evacuated: the bridgehead of Mainz, the bridgehead of Kehl and the remainder of the German territory under occupation. [This forms the so-called third zone of the Rhineland.] If at that date the guarantees against unprovoked aggression by Germany are not considered sufficient by the Allied and Associated Governments, the evacuation of the occupying troops may be delayed to the extent regarded as necessary for the purpose of obtaining the required guarantee."<sup>4</sup>

As a further guarantee, Article 430 provides:

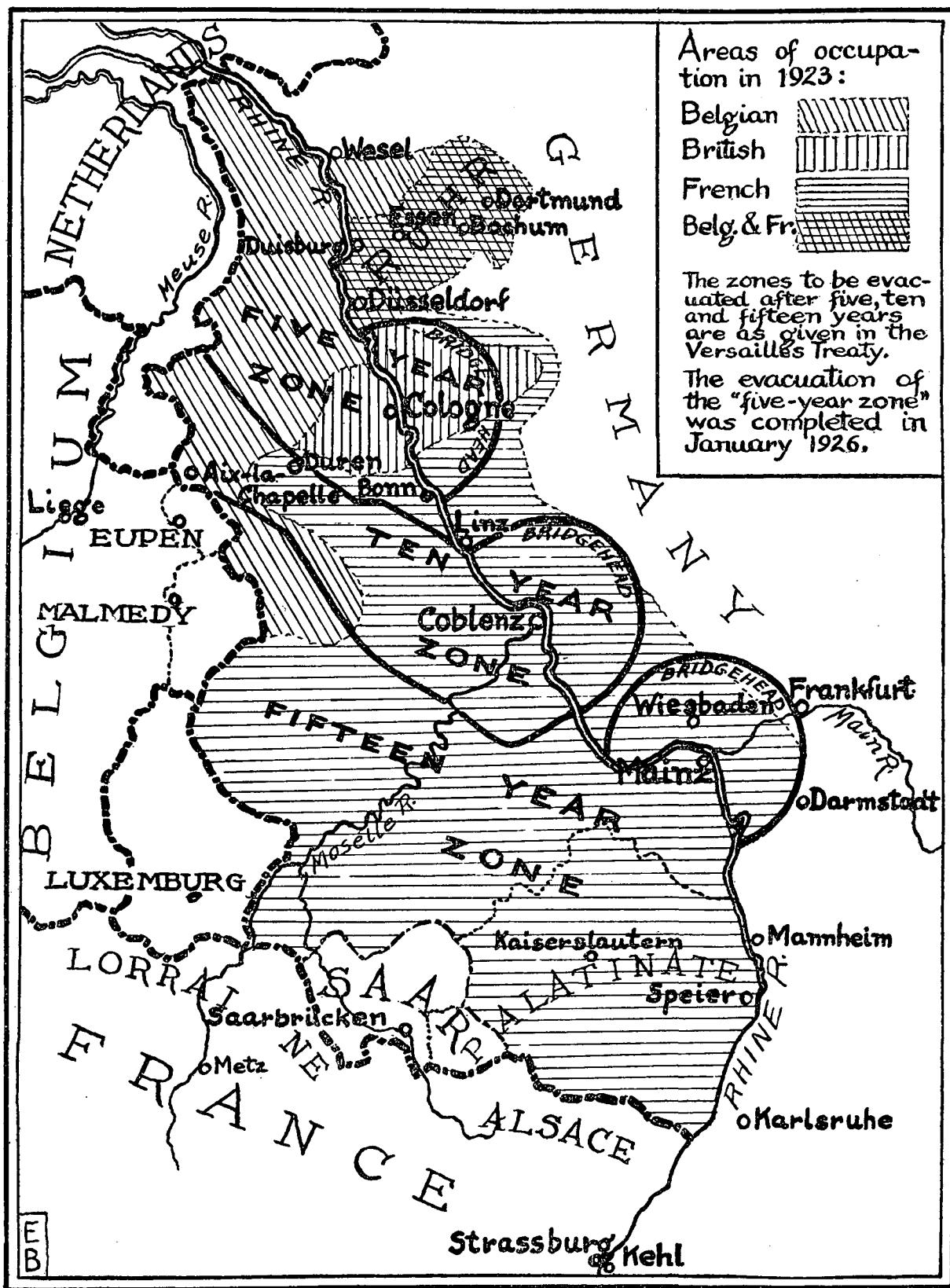
"In case either during the occupation or after the expiration of the fifteen years referred to above, the Reparation Commission finds that Germany refuses to observe the whole or part of her obligations under the present Treaty with regard to reparation, the whole or part of the areas specified in Article 429 will be reoccupied by the Allied and Associated forces."

On the other hand, Article 431 states: "If before the expiration of the period of fifteen years Germany complies with all the undertakings resulting from the present Treaty, the occupying forces will be withdrawn immediately." It is on this article that the Reich bases its present demand that the Rhineland be evacuated immediately. This demand is further rein-

3. Versailles Treaty, Part XIV, Articles 428-432.

4. Article 429.

## THE RHINELAND



forced by the terms of a declaration signed at Versailles on June 16, 1919 by the United States, Great Britain and France "in regard to the occupation of the Rhine provinces."<sup>5</sup>

This declaration states:

"The Allied and Associated Powers did not insist on making the period of occupation last until the reparation clauses were completely executed, because they assumed that Germany would be obliged to give every proof of her good will and every necessary guarantee before the end of the fifteen years' time.

"As the cost of occupation involves an equivalent reduction of the amount available for reparations, the Allied and Associated Powers stipulated, by Article 431 of the treaty, that if before the end of the fifteen years' period Germany had fulfilled all her obligations under the treaty, the troops of occupation should be immediately withdrawn.

"If Germany, at the earlier date, has given proofs of her good will and satisfactory guarantees to assure the fulfillment of her obligations the Allied and Associated Powers concerned will be ready to come to an agreement between themselves for the earlier termination of the period of occupation."

The left bank of the Rhine has been permanently demilitarized by the Versailles Treaty. Under Articles 42, 43 and 44, Germany is forbidden to maintain or construct any fortifications either on the left or the right bank to the west of a line drawn 50 kilometers east of the Rhine. Nor can the Reich maintain or assemble armed forces, either permanently or temporarily, in this area or undertake any "permanent works for mobilization" there. A violation of these prohibitions is to be regarded as a hostile act against the signatories of the treaty and "calculated to disturb the peace of the world."<sup>6</sup> The use of this wording implies that such a hostile act on the part of the Reich would become a matter of concern to the League of Nations under Article XI of the Covenant. Thus, even after the Allied troops of occupation are

<sup>5</sup>. *American Journal of International Law*, Supp., Vol. 13, 1919, p. 410-411.

<sup>6</sup>. The Locarno Rhineland pact between Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy is even more far-reaching. Article I provides as follows: "The high contracting parties collectively and severally guarantee, in the manner provided in the following articles, the maintenance of the territorial *status quo* resulting from the frontiers between Germany and Belgium and between Germany and France and the inviolability of the said frontiers as fixed by or in pursuance of the Treaty of Peace signed at Versailles on the 28th June, 1919, and also the observance of the stipulation of Articles 42 and 43 of the said treaty concerning the demilitarized zone."

eventually withdrawn from the Rhineland, this strip of territory between France and Germany remains permanently neutralized, and since the coming into force of the Locarno treaties this neutralization and the frontiers as well are under the guarantee of Italy and Britain.

#### THE RHINELAND AGREEMENT

A separate Rhineland agreement was signed between Germany and the United States, Belgium, Britain and France on June 28, 1919, the same day that the Versailles Treaty was signed, which provided that the occupying forces should consist of troops provided by Britain, France, Belgium and the United States. According to an arrangement made at the end of 1918, the following distribution of the occupying forces had been made and was continued after peace was signed:<sup>7</sup> The Belgians occupied the northernmost district, centering about München-Gladbach and Aix-la-Chapelle. The British were stationed in a district, the centre of which was Cologne. The Americans occupied a district centering around Coblenz. The French occupied the entire southern part of the area, including Mainz and the Bavarian Palatinate. Furthermore, the city of Bonn, between Cologne and Coblenz, which had been temporarily occupied by the British at the request of the French, was officially handed over to the French on February 20, 1920. And when on January 10, 1923 the American troops were withdrawn from Coblenz, the French took their place.

#### THE HIGH COMMISSION

The Rhineland agreement further set up a civilian body, called the Inter-Allied Rhineland High Commission, as the "supreme representative of the Allied and Associated Powers within the occupied territory." This commission was given the power to issue ordinances "so far as may be necessary for securing the maintenance, safety, and requirements of the Allied and Associated forces." These ordinances have the force of law. Otherwise the civil administration was to remain in the hands of the German authorities, except as changes

<sup>7</sup>. Cf. map, p. 3.

might be necessitated in adapting the administration to the needs and circumstances of military occupation. The agreement gave the commission special powers with regard to all means of communication —railway, post, telegraph and telephone. It contained fairly detailed provisions in regard to the billeting of troops. The High Commission was empowered "whenever they think it necessary, to declare a state of siege in any part of the territory or in the whole of it."<sup>8</sup>

The British, French and Belgians were represented on the commission, the French delegate being the chairman. The United States was at first represented by Mr. Pierrepont Noyes as an official observer, but because of the failure of the United States to ratify the Versailles Treaty, no American could technically become a member of the commission and he was withdrawn. However, as long as the American troops participated in the occupation, an American representative was present at the meetings. General Henry T. Allen, Commander of the United States Army of Occupation, acted as the American observer on the commission and although he could not vote his opinions had weight in their deliberations.

The commission took up its seat in Coblenz and a network of officials throughout the occupied territory administered its ordinances.<sup>9</sup> Under the terms of the agreement, relations between the occupying forces and the German civil authorities were under the jurisdiction of the Rhineland High Commission as a civil body. Persons who committed offenses against the Allied armies were, however, tried by the military courts.

The commission's authority extended equally over all parts of the occupied area and its decisions required only a majority vote. In case of a tie, the president cast the deciding vote. If a commissioner was dissatisfied with a decision of the commission, he might appeal to his government. In urgent cases, however, such an appeal would not delay the execution of the de-

cision. Responsible to the commission are eight Permanent Committees composed of technical advisers of the four countries concerned.<sup>10</sup> These committees study in advance questions coming before the commission and usually their views are accepted. A list of the Permanent Committees gives an idea of the extent of the High Commission's power. They comprise: Administrative, Coal, Communications, Economic, Financial, Intelligence, Legal and Requisitions Committees.

Peace between the United States and Germany was not proclaimed until November 14, 1921 and General Allen was, therefore, in a legal sense still acting under the terms of the Armistice which had regulated the Allied occupation of the Rhineland. However, General Allen states that he "deemed it advisable in the interest of unity among the Allies to put the ordinances of the High Commission, created by the Rhineland Agreement, into effect in the American Zone."<sup>11</sup>

#### ADMINISTRATION OF THE OCCUPIED AREA

The ordinances of the Rhineland High Commission have the force of law in the occupied territory. Furthermore, the commission can suspend or modify German laws if they feel it necessary and the commission has scrutinized new German laws carefully. As a result, the laws effective in the occupied territory are: ordinances of the Rhineland High Commission applicable to both the German civil population and the Allied armies, and German laws which apply to foreigners not actually attached to the occupying authorities and also to German nationals. Thus the German courts retain their civil and criminal jurisdiction except as against Allied personnel, and persons committing offenses against the persons or property of Allied forces. In the latter case, jurisdiction may be conferred on the German courts.<sup>12</sup>

The High Commission's ordinances have become an integral part of the German laws in so far as the German nationals are concerned. German courts have had to

8. The text of the Rhineland agreement is published in the *American Journal of International Law*, Supp., Vol. 13, 1919, p. 404 *et seq.*

9. In September 1921 there were 1,300 of these officials. *Politischer Almanach, 1925*, p. 416.

10. Three after the withdrawal of the United States.

11. Cf. Allen, H. T., *The Rhineland Occupation*, p. 116.

12. Ireton, Robert E., "The Rhineland Commission at Work," *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 17, 1923, p. 460 *et seq.*

take into consideration the enactments of the commission in interpreting their own laws. Actually, the ordinances take precedence over all German laws, annulling the provisions of those in conflict with them. Furthermore, German authorities not only are subject to prosecution for disobeying the ordinances but may be suspended or removed from office or expelled from the occupied territory. During the Ruhr occupation wholesale expulsions from the Rhineland were made.

Besides regulating relations between the occupying forces and the civil population, these ordinances deal with a great variety of other subjects, closely controlling life in the occupied territory. Movement of persons, postal, telegraphic and telephone communication, restrictions on the press and public meetings, possession of and trading in arms and ammunition, as well as the procedure to be followed in settling industrial disputes are covered among other things by these ordinances. Political meetings cannot be held unless the *Kreis*

representative has been given forty-eight hours' notice in writing, stating the names of the organizers and the objects of the meeting. The High Commission may prohibit the meeting if it considers that it would imperil the safety of the occupying forces. It has frequently not allowed meetings to be held and may even break up an authorized meeting under certain contingencies.

The various Allied officials stationed throughout the territory are charged with insuring the observance of these regulations and act as liaisons between the local German civil administration and the military authorities. Each occupying power has its own representatives in the section under its jurisdiction although the text of the Versailles Treaty did not recognize any distinction between the various areas. As a result, the policy in the different sections varies somewhat and there has been a marked difference in the spirit of the administration of the occupation in the different areas.

### FRiction IN THE OCCUPIED AREA

The task of an occupying army is at best extremely difficult. The fact that German civil and Allied military administrations obtain in the same area and the difficulty of fixing the precise limits of each have offered many possibilities of conflict. Things seem to have gone fairly well during the first three years of the occupation, particularly in the British zone,<sup>13</sup> where satisfactory relations were established and maintained between the occupying troops and the population. However, in the French zone the Germans made many complaints, and relations were not so good.

The presence of colored troops in the French army of occupation raised in particular a storm of protest in Germany. This was probably partly due to a feeling of injured dignity that a civilized European country should be subjected to occupation by black troops. To this the French countered that these soldiers formed an integral part of the French army, and that colored troops were quartered in many parts

of France itself. General Allen reprints in the appendix to his book on the Rhineland occupation an extract from a report which he made by request to the State Department on the colored troop situation in July 1920. In this document he states that from January 1919 to June 1, 1920 there was an average of 5,200 negro troops in the French Army of the Rhine. The average number of "French colonial troops composed of natives of Africa not of pure negro blood, including distinct peoples such as Arabs from Algeria, Moroccans, etc., and Negroids, was 20,000 men." In June 1921 the General reports that a thorough investigation of the situation showed that from 12 to 15 per cent of the colonial troops in the French Army of the Rhine were pure negroes or approximately pure negroes. By the end of 1925, it is reported, all complete native units had been withdrawn, leaving only some 2,500 North Africans and Anamites serving as transport drivers and orderlies.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup>. This was true, too, of the American zone. Cf. Toynbee, A. J., *Survey of International Affairs*, 1920-23, p. 102.

<sup>14</sup>. Reynolds, Major B. T., "A Review of the Occupation of the Rhineland," *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Relations*, May, 1928, p. 209.

There were many accusations of assault and violence made against the colored troops, the German press in particular of course stressing these charges. The press outside Germany, too, was full of reports of this nature. Upon investigation, many of these charges were not substantiated but, as General Allen points out, "European sentiment in general was inclined to sympathize with the feelings of the German population." The General continues: "From many points of view it was deemed unwise to utilize semi-civilized colored troops, whether brown or black, as an occupying force in the territory of a highly civilized people. It is certain that the presence and conduct of the colored troops in the Rhineland aroused an increased hatred of the French by the German people. There were many Frenchmen who doubted the wisdom of using these colored soldiers in the Rhineland."<sup>15</sup>

Besides the complaints of the Germans in regard to colored troops it was charged by them that the French made use of their position to gain control over the valuable economic and industrial resources of the district.

During the Armistice, the Allies suspended the German export and import regulations which applied to the territory under occupation. The result was the so-called "hole in the West," through which goods entered unoccupied Germany duty-free and left Germany the same way. In March 1920 the old German import and export regulations were re-established by the Allies. A year later, in March 1921, as a further sanction against the Reich at the time that Ruhrort, Duisburg and Düsseldorf were occupied, a customs line was established between the unoccupied and the occupied districts and duties levied on

all exports and imports. The Rhineland High Commission was given entire control of this customs line including the right to issue export and import certificates and the power to change any of the arrangements concerning duties and tariffs.<sup>16</sup>

When these sanctions were removed in October 1921, this arrangement was changed, although export and import certificates from a German bureau were still required for firms located in the occupied territory.

During the Ruhr occupation, a very strict customs cordon obtained between the Ruhr and unoccupied Germany, and no goods were allowed to leave the Ruhr without a license from Franco-Belgian custom authorities. The Rhineland High Commission on January 20, 1923 set up a Customs Committee and a Committee for Import and Export Licenses, and the next month it drew a continuous customs cordon from Wesel to Düsseldorf along the line dividing the occupied from the unoccupied territory on the right bank of the Rhine. The export of goods without license from the Rhineland to the unoccupied territory was prohibited by ordinance of the Rhineland High Commission. In June 1923 duties were imposed and licenses required on goods entering the occupied area from unoccupied territory. These regulations were finally abolished when the Dawes Plan came into force in the autumn of 1924.

The Allies extended the occupation for a time in 1921 by occupying the important industrial cities of Ruhrort, Duisburg and Düsseldorf as a reprisal because of German failure to comply with Allied demands at the London conference of February and March 1921. The occupation of these three cities lasted from March until October 1921.

### THE OCCUPATION OF THE RUHR

During the year 1922, French public opinion became more and more restive and demanded action to force Germany to pay reparation; M. Poincaré became Prime Minister of France in January 1922 and insisted that force was the only argument the Germans could appreciate. In Decem-

ber 1922 the Reparation Commission by a majority vote declared that the Reich was in default in the delivery of timber, coal and cattle in payment of reparation in kind. The British representative on the Reparation Commission voted against this declaration. As a result of the commis-

15. Allen, Henry T., *op. cit.*, p. 319, *et seq.*

16. Strupp, *Wörterbuch des Völkerrechts*, Vol. II, p. 385.

sion's action, the French and Belgians occupied the Ruhr basin in January 1923. This occupation of the most important industrial area of Germany and the subsequent struggle between German passive resistance and the occupying forces, has been described as a "state of war without a military front."<sup>17</sup>

The first three years of the occupation of the Rhineland by the British, Belgian and American forces were relatively quiet. The occupation of the Ruhr by the French and Belgians in January 1923, and the consequent extension of the French and Belgian zones of occupation to include this territory, together with British non-cooperation in the Ruhr adventure and the German policy of passive resistance, however, greatly disturbed the relatively good relations which had obtained in the occupied area between the Germans and the inter-Allied authorities. A wave of unrest swept over Germany as a result of the Ruhr invasion and naturally the Rhinelanders were affected.

The Rhineland High Commission, by majority votes on February 2 and 26, 1923, decided to extend its jurisdiction over the newly occupied territory. On both occasions the British representative abstained from voting. The commission increased the stringency of its control over the entire area in spite of the continued adverse votes of the British representative, and thus tended to assimilate the status of the Rhineland proper with that of the Ruhr to form one province under Franco-Belgian domination. The British contended that the commission in so doing was exceeding its authority, and relations between Britain and France became rather strained. This Franco-Belgian policy was connected with the so-called "separatist movement" although the French and Belgians officially insisted that they were neutral in regard to that conflict. In spite of these protestations, the whole Rhineland occupation was given a marked political character by the events following upon the Ruhr invasion.

17. From 80 to 85 per cent of Germany's coal and 80 per cent of her steel and pig-iron production are centered in the Ruhr, as well as 70 per cent of the goods and mineral traffic on her railways and 10 per cent of her population. Toynbee, A. J., *Survey of International Affairs*, 1924, p. 267 *et seq.*

### THE SEPARATIST MOVEMENT

The third source of complaint by the Germans against French policy in the occupied area was that they made and encouraged every effort to separate permanently the left bank of the Rhine from Germany. From 1920 on, the separatist movement in the Rhineland was active although it seems neither to have been representative of the local German population nor important in international affairs. However, during the Ruhr occupation, especially during the period of German passive resistance, the movement assumed much more serious form. This has been explained partly on the ground of the disorganization of the German administration due to the Ruhr struggle and partly because of the greater measure of support which was given to the movement at this time by the French representatives in the Rhineland. It does not fall within the scope of this report to describe the separatist movement which is now ancient history. Suffice it to say that the official attitude of the French Government was summed up toward the end of the controversy in the following message from M. Poincaré to the German Ambassador in Paris, dated February 21, 1924: "It is not for us to enter into discussions with the German Ambassador on the subject of the Separatist Movement in the Rhineland—a quarrel among Germans in which we have no desire to take part." In spite of the fact that this was all along the official attitude of Paris towards the matter, the French representatives in the Rhineland encouraged and aided the separatists with food, railway passes, and arms, even to the extent of protecting them against the German police. Furthermore, wholesale expulsions of German officials, especially in the Palatinate, by the separatists took place with French connivance.<sup>18</sup>

### FRANCO-BRITISH TENSION

The British zone has been described as an "oasis in a wilderness of trouble" during this period.<sup>19</sup> Wholesale expulsions, shooting and great hardships attended the

18. Toynbee, *op. cit.*, 1925, p. 300-322.

19. *Ibid.*, 1924, p. 279.

occupation of the other sections of the Rhineland. Martial law or special ordinances of the Rhineland High Commission of almost equal severity obtained throughout except in the Cologne area. Economic pressure, embargoes (especially on coal) and a Franco-Belgian customs cordon added to the misery which was intensified all over by the rapid fall of the mark in value. In the occupied territory with the exception of the British zone, the railways were operated during this period by a Franco-Belgian Railway *Régie*. In the British zone German operation of the railways continued, for had the British authorities allowed trains run by the *Régie* to cross the Cologne zone it would have compromised their neutrality in the Ruhr struggle. For a time there was no through service between the Ruhr and the French occupied sections of the Rhineland. A compromise was finally arrived at but it was not until December 1923, almost a year after the Ruhr occupation began, that a provisional agreement was signed between the *Régie* and the British for co-ordination of traffic. The agreement with the British was not finally settled until February 1924, or almost five months after German passive resistance had ceased.

#### EVACUATION OF THE RUHR

With the meeting of the London conference in July and August 1924, and the coming into force of the Dawes Plan, the reparation problem became less acute. This had an effect on the Rhineland question and notes exchanged between the Belgian, French and German Governments on August 16, 1924, the same date on which the London agreement was signed, stipulated that if Germany carried out the London agreement "in a spirit of loyalty and pacification," the evacuation of the Ruhr should take place not later than August 16, 1925. In the meantime the additional areas occupied in January 1924<sup>20</sup> were to be evacuated at once as a proof of French and Belgian good-will. This evacuation actually began on August 19, 1924 and was

completed November 17, 1924. On July 31, 1925 the evacuation of the Ruhr was completed, and on August 25, 1925 Düsseldorf, Duisburg and Ruhrtort were again relieved of occupation.

With the coming into force of the Dawes Plan, there were many changes in the administration of the occupied territory. At the beginning of December 1924 the Rhineland High Commission announced a long list of relaxations, the enumeration of which gives an idea of conditions obtaining in the occupied territory before that time:

"1. German laws and decrees would in the future 'in almost every case' be allowed to become operative in occupied territory at the same time as in other parts of Germany.

"2. Persons whose expulsion had been decided on would in the future be told the ground on which the order of expulsion was made and would be heard by representatives of the High Commission.

"3. The right of the High Commission to veto such appointments of German officials as it considered might imperil the safety of the Armies of Occupation would not in the future be exercised until the official concerned had been warned of the objection raised to his appointment and allowed to prepare a defense. The same principle would be applied in the case of dismissals of German officials.

"4. Persons sentenced to imprisonment would not in future be removed from German territory to serve their sentences without a special order of the High Commission.

"5. 6. 7. The Ordinance authorizing the military authorities to prosecute tradesmen for making excessive profits, that allowing the occupying authorities to interfere in certain affairs of insurance companies, and that prescribing private letter delivery companies would be cancelled.

"8. Formal reports of cases in the German Courts would not in future be called for from the German judicial authorities.

"9. The Rhineland High Commission would instruct its local representatives to give the most favorable consideration possible to applications for permission to display flags at religious and national festivals and at sports meetings.

"It was also announced that the Rhineland High Commission was considering further relaxations concerning the restrictions on the Press and the protection of the liberty of individuals."<sup>21</sup>

20. Essen, Dortmund and Bochum in the Ruhr had been occupied in reprisal of stoppage of coal deliveries.

21. Toynbee, *op. cit.*, 1924, p. 389.

## EVACUATION OF THE FIRST ZONE

According to the Versailles Treaty, the first or Cologne zone of the Rhineland was due to be evacuated on January 10, 1925 if Germany had fulfilled her obligations under the treaty. Partly because the French were still in the Ruhr early in 1925 and partly because the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission stated that Germany had not carried out certain disarmament requirements of the treaty, the British did not evacuate Cologne in January 1925 as the Germans had expected.

The fact that the Cologne zone would not be evacuated on January 10 was communicated to the German Government in a note from the Conference of Ambassadors on January 5, 1925, listing specific defaults in carrying out the disarmament obligations with which the Reich was charged and which the note stated could not possibly be fulfilled by January 10. The Inter-Allied Military Control Commission had not as yet made its report on German disarmament and the Reich Government replied to the Allies that the prolongation of the occupation "over the time set by the treaty," was creating a very grave situation. Furthermore, as soon as the details of Germany's alleged defaults were presented, the Reich would reply to them point by point, but "the attempt to justify the delay in evacuation of the northern Rhineland zone by the state of Germany's disarmament can be considered at once as mistaken," for no defaults of Germany could be commensurate with the severity of the measure.

Throughout Germany feeling was intense. Protest meetings were held and sentiment ran high. It has since become known that Dr. Stresemann's famous offer of a Rhineland guarantee pact, which was eventually made on February 9, 1925 and of which Locarno is the direct result, was partly motivated by the Allied action in regard to the Cologne zone.<sup>22</sup>

It was not until February 17, 1925 that the report of the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission was made, and in the meantime interchanges of notes between the Allies and Germany had continued with no

result. The whole problem of Rhineland evacuation and in particular of the Cologne zone is from this point intimately bound up with the pre-Locarno negotiations. France felt that the evacuation of the Cologne bridgehead would menace her security; Britain made evacuation dependent only on German fulfillment of disarmament obligations. French fears for her security were only allayed by the conclusion of the Locarno security agreement in October 1925 in which Germany and France promised not to attack one another and Britain and Italy guaranteed Germany's western frontier as established by the Versailles Treaty.<sup>23</sup>

### DEMANDS FOR GERMAN DISARMAMENT

In the meantime, on June 4, 1925, the Conference of Ambassadors presented a disarmament note to Berlin,<sup>24</sup> pointing out in great detail her military defaults and stating that "it now rests with the German Government themselves to create the conditions in which evacuation can speedily be effected." The note says further that the Reparation Commission had reported that "Germany is at the present moment faithfully fulfilling her reparation obligations as they are at present fixed," and that the Allied Governments were therefore prepared "to order the evacuation of the first zone of occupation so soon as the breaches of the treaty enumerated in Part III of the attached memorandum have been made good." Answering the German charge that continued occupation of the Cologne zone after January 10, 1925 "constituted a measure of reprisal," the Allied note stated that this allegation was based on a "complete misapprehension of the bearing of Articles 428 and 429 of the treaty." It was for the German Government "by faithfully fulfilling their obligations to earn the benefit of the evacuation of the first zone of occupation, as provided by Article 429." Thus the Allies stood firm on what they considered their legal rights and the note made no mention of the security negotiations then in progress. These negotiations continued throughout the summer and the Reich made no reply

22. Cf. Toynbee, *op. cit.*, 1925, p. 16-17; the text of the German note of February 9, 1925 has been published as a British White Paper, Cmd. 2436.

23. Cf. p. 4, footnote 6.

24. The note has been published as a British White Paper, Cmd. 2429.

to the note of June 4 until October 23. In the meantime a German *Aide-Mémoire* of September 26, 1925, accompanying the German note of that date which accepted the invitation to the Locarno Conference, stated:

“... the understanding and the reconciliation which are the objects in view, would be prejudiced if before the entry of Germany into the League of Nations and before the conclusion of the Security Pact it were found impossible to dispose of a dispute which still separates Germany from the Allies. The dispute referred to is that about the evacuation of the North Rhenish zone and the final settlement of the disarmament question.”

The British reply of September 29 stated that the date of evacuation of the Cologne zone depended “solely on the fulfillment of Germany’s disarmament obligations, and that His Majesty’s Government will welcome the performance of these obligations as permitting the Allies at once to evacuate the northern zone.” The Belgian and French replies were couched in more or less similar terms.

#### THE LOCARNO CONFERENCE

The Locarno Conference met on October 5, 1925, the treaties were initialed on October 16, and it was decided that formal signature would take place in London on December 1. Between these dates important developments took place in regard to the evacuation of the Cologne zone of the Rhineland. It was generally felt that German irritation over the failure of the Allies to evacuate the Cologne zone had been one of the most difficult obstacles to overcome at Locarno. As early as October 16 the German Government issued a semi-official communiqué designed to create an atmosphere in Germany favorable to the Locarno treaties, which indicated among other things that as a result of Germany’s signature concessions might be obtained in regard to the Rhineland occupation. Non-Nationalist opinion in Germany was on the whole enthusiastic about the Locarno settlement, but the Nationalist members of the Cabinet resigned because the pact “was unacceptable to the Party.” Feeling in many circles—notably among the Rhineland representatives and members of the Catholic Center party and the People’s

party—was in favor of accepting the pact on condition that concessions be granted in the occupied territory. When it became known that the Allies were prepared to grant such concessions, the internal situation in Germany became less tense.

On October 23, 1925 the German Ambassador in Paris transmitted a note from his government to the Ambassadors’ Conference which was the formal answer of the Reich to the Allied note of June 4. The German note enumerated the disarmament obligations which had already been complied with by the Reich before the receipt of the Allied note of June 4 and listed the further demands which had either been completely met or were in final process of completion, as well as certain other points which necessitated a longer period to carry out. These, the note stated, were also well under way. A small number of moot questions remained to be settled, and the Reich Government suggested a discussion with the Allied representatives with a view to finding a solution satisfactory to all. The tone of the note was conciliatory. Marshal Foch informed the Allies that he was of the opinion that Germany had made real efforts to carry out her disarmament obligations although there were some important questions which must still be settled. As a result, the Allies replied to Germany on November 6, 1925, stating that they had “been happy to note the effort made by the German Government to conform to the demands made by the Allied Governments in their note of 4th June; in particular they have observed with satisfaction that, with the exception of a few points still to be verified by the Commission of Control, the information received from the latter relative to that part of the programme entirely executed agrees with the statements made in list Number 1 annexed to the aforementioned German note.” Furthermore, the Allied note asked for German proposals on certain disputed points and expressed the hope that after hearing these suggestions, they would be able to set the date for evacuation of the Cologne zone of the Rhineland. The note specified December 1 as the date on which the Allies would like to start the evacuation.<sup>25</sup>

25. The texts of this correspondence between the Allies and Germany have been published as a British White Paper, Cmnd. 2527.

At about the same time it was reported that the Allies had reached an agreement among themselves in regard to ameliorations to be introduced into the occupation régime in the Rhineland. On November 14 the Conference of Ambassadors informed Berlin that, animated by the Locarno spirit, the occupying powers had "decided to introduce into the occupation all the alleviations compatible with the Treaty of Versailles." These comprised approval of a German commissioner for the Rhineland and assurances of large grants of amnesty, the considerable reduction of the number of troops of occupation and facilitation of the free exercise of the German administration in the occupied territory. The new German commissioner, Baron Langwerth von Simmern, former German Ambassador in Madrid, took up his duties on December 23, 1925.

Some further negotiations took place between the Allies and Germany in regard to specific disarmament points, and finally, in a verbal declaration, the Allies "decided to fix the beginning of the evacuation of the Cologne zone for the 1st December." The regrouping of the forces of occupation was undertaken at once and the first detachment of British troops left Cologne on November 30, 1925, while the official evacuation began on the next day, December 1. On December 30 the British Army of the Rhine took over officially the administration of the Wiesbaden zone from the French. The Belgian occupation of the northern zone was terminated on January 29, 1926, while on January 30 the

last of the British troops left Cologne. On the same date the French evacuated Bonn. The evacuation of the northern Rhineland zone was officially completed at midnight on the 31st of January 1926.

#### GERMANY ADMITTED TO THE LEAGUE

On September 10, 1926 Germany was admitted to the League of Nations with a permanent seat on the Council. On September 16, 1926 there occurred the famous Thoiry luncheon between Briand and Stresemann when the first suggestion of Germany's "buying" the Allied troops out of the Rhineland seems to have been made. It will be recalled that the Thoiry project called for the sale of a portion of the German railway bonds, the proceeds of which were to go to France and Belgium in return for evacuation of the Rhineland. The scheme did not come to fruition but the idea of commercialization of reparation in return for evacuation is still in the air.

The Inter-Allied Military Control Commission was withdrawn from Germany on January 31, 1927, pursuant to a decision of the Locarno powers made on December 12, 1926. The control of German disarmament has been vested in the League Council in accordance with Article 213 of the Versailles Treaty. The withdrawal of the Inter-Allied Commission thus officially recognizes that Germany is living up to her disarmament obligations under the treaty.

#### DEBATE ON RHINELAND EVACUATION

Evacuation of the Rhineland has been the subject of many speeches in Germany, France, Britain and Belgium and recently the French allies, Poland and Czechoslovakia, have added their voices to the chorus. The German demand for early evacuation has been based primarily on legal grounds. The Reich declares that under the terms of the treaty and of the subsequent declaration of Wilson, Clemenceau and Lloyd George<sup>26</sup> she was promised that if she had fulfilled all her obligations under the Versailles Treaty before the end of fifteen years, the Rhineland would not be occupied for the full term.

Furthermore, the declaration states that the Allies did not insist on making the period of occupation last until the reparation clauses were completely executed. Germany claims that she is fully carrying out her obligations under the treaty both in reparation payments and in the disarmament clauses. It is now the turn of the Allies, declares Germany, to live up to their side of the agreement and withdraw their troops from German soil. In an interview on Christmas Day 1928 with the Berlin representative of the *Baltimore Sun*, Dr. Stresemann gave a clear statement of the German legal thesis. He pointed out that Article 431

<sup>26.</sup> Cf. p. 4.

of the treaty is worded, if Germany *complies* with her obligations before 1935, not *has complied*, the occupying forces will be withdrawn. As to early evacuation being dependent on Germany's liquidation of her total reparation debt before 1935, the Foreign Minister said:

"To do so would make Article 431 senseless. At the peace negotiations nobody seriously considered Germany could pay the total reparation imposed before 1935. This is demonstrated by the treaty itself specifying a period of thirty years for payment, with provisions for further time extensions."

Besides the legal argument, the Germans maintain that the presence of foreign troops is completely anomalous in view of the fact that the Reich is a Member of the League with a permanent seat on the Council. Moreover, the presence of military tribunals and troops on German territory is looked upon as a grave infringement of German sovereignty, while the occupation is said to cause hardships to the Rhineland because it intensifies the chronic housing shortage and because of the impossibility of avoiding occasional clashes between the forces of occupation and the native population.

#### THE GERMAN VIEWPOINT

The German viewpoint is well summarized in a speech made in the Reichstag on November 19, 1928 by Foreign Minister Stresemann. He said in part:

"It was a great disappointment to the German people that the discussions in Geneva did not result in success for us. Our opponents maintained a thesis which we could not recognize as legal and which from the political standpoint is contrary to the common interests of the peoples concerned. Germany will continue to maintain that it is entitled to prompt evacuation of the entire occupied territory and that this right is not dependent upon the solution of other problems or on conditions of any other sort. Germany is being legally wronged as long as this claim is not met. We cannot therefore consider assuming, in return for evacuation, any political obligations extending beyond the period of evacuation stipulated in the treaty. Nor can we purchase evacuation with financial compensations."<sup>27</sup>

Presumably Dr. Stresemann refers to the setting up of any sort of international control of the Rhineland after 1935, which the

Germans strenuously oppose. This question will doubtless be considered by the Commission of Verification and Conciliation when it is finally constituted.

#### THE FRENCH VIEWPOINT

France on the other hand argues that Germany will not have complied with the peace treaty until she has accepted a definitive reparation settlement and that until such an agreement is reached, the Allied troops should remain on the Rhine. France—and Belgium, Poland and Czechoslovakia, as well—regard the occupation as a pledge guaranteeing Germany's fulfillment of the peace treaty. "Good (cash) reckonings make good friends," says a French proverb,<sup>28</sup> which has been suggested as a preamble to the Rhineland discussions.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, from the military standpoint evacuation would mean the abandonment of an effectual guarantee against eventual German aggression. In spite of the guarantee provisions of the Locarno Rhineland pact and the demilitarization of the Rhineland by the Versailles Treaty itself, at least a portion of French opinion believes that Germany is plotting a war of revenge against France and that the French watch on the Rhine is essential to their security. They insist as well that after eventual evacuation there must be some sort of permanent control of the demilitarized zone of the Rhineland.

The French struggle for security has dominated much of the history of the last decade. A strong section of French opinion, led by Marshal Foch, demanded at the Peace Conference that Germany's western frontier be fixed at the Rhine and that German territory west of the Rhine (with the exception of Alsace-Lorraine and the Saar which were to be annexed to France) should be detached from the Reich and made into an autonomous, neutral State under Belgian and French military suzerainty.<sup>30</sup>

The primary basis of this French demand was her overwhelming desire for security against Germany and her fear of her neighbor across the Rhine. The Rhineland provinces comprise one of the most highly in-

27. *Frankfurter Zeitung, Zweites Morgenblatt*, November 20, 1928.

28. "Les bons comptes font des bons amis."

29. Cf. *L'Europe Nouvelle*, September 8, 1928, p. 1219; "L'Evacuation rhénane et le règlement des réparations," by Vladimir d'Ormesson.

30. A Russo-French secret treaty of March 11, 1917 had provided for such a settlement in Western Europe.

dustrialized and richest sections of the Reich and their loss would have greatly crippled German war potentiality. During the Ruhr occupation it was charged that the underlying basis of French policy was the desire to separate the Ruhr and Rhineland from Germany and thus permanently cripple the ancient enemy of France. A report made to M. Poincaré in May 1922, before the occupation of the Ruhr, by a M. Dariac gave color to these charges.<sup>31</sup> M. Dariac had been sent by M. Poincaré as a commissioner to investigate the economics and industry of the Rhine provinces and reported that France by her occupation of this entire area would be in possession of a pledge of the "first importance for the recovery of the sums which Germany has undertaken to pay." He reported that the German industrialists alone are able to pay and pointed out how easily industry in that highly organized area could be disorganized. Furthermore, the report suggested that the entire Rhineland, including the Ruhr, be separated by degrees from Germany and placed under French and Belgian military guardianship as an autonomous province. While the Ruhr spirit in France seems now for the most part to have been replaced by the spirit of Locarno, there are still extremists who argue that it would be the height of folly for France to evacuate the Rhineland. And a large section of less extreme opinion maintains that in the event of evacuation France could not be sure that Germany would fulfill her obligations under the Dawes Plan, and that the occupation is the one remaining hold which France has over Germany. Furthermore, the occupation is regarded as insurance against the union of Austria and Germany,<sup>32</sup> which French conservatives at least regard as a grave danger. The occupation, they feel, also acts as a restraining influence on the German nationalists. And finally, if the Rhineland must be evacuated in 1935, at least the French must have the remaining six years to build up their army and strengthen their frontier fortifications in the north and northeast.<sup>33</sup>

31. Published in the *Manchester Guardian*, November 2, 1922, p. 9-10; a supplementary Dariac report dealing with the Saar was published in the *Manchester Guardian*, March 5, 1923.

32. Cf. F. P. A. Information Service, Vol. III, No. 20, "The Problem of an Austro-German Union."

33. Cf. General Mordacq, *L'Evacuation de la Rhénanie, passim.*

Poland, too, wants the Rhine occupation maintained. On December 15, 1928 the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Polish Sejm adopted a motion stressing the necessity of continued occupation until Poland receives a sort of Locarno guarantee of the German-Polish frontier.<sup>34</sup> The Poles are fearful of what they term the "imperialistic spirit in Germany," notably because of the Reich's well-known dissatisfaction with its eastern frontiers. They fear that once the Rhineland is free, Germany will turn her attention to revision of the present status of the so-called "Polish Corridor," Danzig and Upper Silesian settlements.

The British are adamant against guaranteeing the eastern frontiers as they have the western, and French Socialists are beginning to inquire whether the French Government is committed to stay in the Rhineland until Poland attains this guarantee.<sup>35</sup>

Czechoslovakia, too, is concerned in the evacuation question, her chief interest being the *Anschluss* problem. Dr. Benes visited Paris in December and much discussion in the press ensued regarding the threat of war because of *Anschluss* agitation. All the new countries created by the Paris peace settlements are anxious that nothing be done which might disturb the *status quo*, at least until they have had time to consolidate their positions and establish themselves securely. The eastern frontiers and the *Anschluss* are very real problems to Poland and Czechoslovakia.

#### THE BRITISH VIEWPOINT

The official British view of evacuation, was stated by Sir Austen Chamberlain in the House of Commons on December 3, 1928. He said that Germany had no legal right to demand freedom of the Rhineland until she had executed not merely her current reparation obligations but the whole of them. The Foreign Secretary added that this was the strict legal interpretation and that as a matter of policy the British Government would welcome early evacuation. His statement raised a storm of protest in Britain.

After reviewing the history of the ten

34. *New York Times*, December 15, 1928.

35. *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, December 21, 1928, p. 488.

years of Rhineland occupation, one cannot but be struck by the difference in the spirit in which the present agitation for evacuation and for what M. Briand has aptly called "the final liquidation of the war" are going forward. With the exception of some extremists, there seems to be little sentiment for holding the Coblenz zone after 1930—quite a different state of affairs than obtained at the time of the evacuation of the Cologne zone which was delayed for almost a year after the time specified in the peace treaty.

The French delegation to the Brussels meeting of the Socialist International, held in August 1928, was instructed to vote for immediate and unconditional evacuation. At the opening session of the International, on August 5, M. Vandervelde of Belgium in his keynote address demanded evacuation, and

M. Leon Blum, the French Socialist leader, in a speech at a banquet of the Belgian workers' party, said: "We have sought to find what measures should be taken concomitant with evacuation in order to facilitate it and make of it the greatest aid to peace. Such measures must without a doubt be in the direction of mutual and international control as a prelude and a decoy for universal control of disarmament." These ideas were echoed a few days later by the German delegates who reminded the congress of the resolutions adopted in 1926 by the League Council in regard to the exercise of the right of investigation of German disarmament which envisaged a special convention controlling the demilitarized Rhineland.<sup>36</sup>

36. Cf. *L'Europe Nouvelle*, August 18, 1928, p. 1112; Third Congress of the Labour and Socialist International, Vol. III, *Proceedings of Congress*, 1928, Part VII, p. 7; p. 53 *et seq.*

#### APPENDIX I TOTAL TROOPS IN THE RHINELAND

September 15, 1922 .....	147,665 <sup>1</sup>
Spring of 1924 .....	200,000 <sup>2</sup>
September 15, 1928 .....	66,969 <sup>2</sup>

1. *Politischer Almanach*, 1925, p. 414.

2. From the German Ministry for Occupied Territories.

#### FRENCH AND BRITISH TROOPS IN THE RHINELAND

Year	French	British
1920	88,550 <sup>1</sup>	no figures
1921	88,042 <sup>1</sup>	no figures
1922	90,419 <sup>1</sup>	10,310 <sup>1</sup>
1923	148,604 <sup>2</sup>	10,207 <sup>3</sup>
1924	103,552 <sup>2</sup>	10,192 <sup>3</sup>
1925	68,978 <sup>2</sup>	9,086 <sup>3</sup>
1926	60,753 <sup>2</sup>	8,549 <sup>3</sup>
1928	54,639 <sup>4</sup>	6,760 <sup>4</sup>

1. *Politischer Almanach*, 1925, p. 414.

2. League of Nations *Armaments Year Book*, 1924, p. 442-43; 1925, p. 554-55; 1926, p. 445; 1927, p. 437.

3. *Ibid.*, 1924, p. 97; 1925, p. 135; 1926, p. 106; 1927, p. 110.

4. From the German Ministry for Occupied Territories.

#### APPENDIX II COST OF RHINELAND OCCUPATION SINCE THE COMING INTO FORCE OF THE EXPERTS' PLAN

Annuity Year	Total
1st Sept. 1, 1924—August 31, 1925 <sup>1</sup>	200,180,407.28 gold marks
2nd Sept. 1, 1925—August 31, 1926 <sup>2</sup>	93,121,083.70 " "
3rd Sept. 1, 1926—August 31, 1927 <sup>3</sup>	76,362,276.78 " "
4th Sept. 1, 1927—August 31, 1928 <sup>4</sup>	67,756,449.67 " "

1. *Report of the Agent General for Reparation Payments*, First Annuity Year, p. 214-15.

2. *Ibid.*, Second Annuity Year, p. 115-19.

3. *Ibid.*, Third Annuity Year, p. 325-29.

4. *Ibid.*, December 22, 1928, p. 177-81. (Germany owes Belgium an additional 179,257.53 gold marks on this account.)

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